

want to stop terrorism. Yet, time after time after time, we see terrorist activity taking place, and who has been involved? It is the Saudi people, and it is people who have been taught in the madrassas, who have been taught that radical fundamentalism that is called Wahhabism.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleagues tonight that this government, the Government of the United States through the State Department, must continue to tell the Saudis that they must take these people on, they have to stop this terrorist activity emanating and originating in their country, and they have to stop this type of teaching of the children. They have been allowing this teaching to go on for 25 to 30 years now.

It is high time that this stopped, because the children who are growing up today are going to be the terrorists of tomorrow; and if they continue to let that happen in their schools, we are going to have to face this not only now, but our children and our grandchildren are going to be facing this kind of terrorist activity down the road.

Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, all of them have to be defeated. We are in a world war against terrorism, and we need every government of the world that believes in freedom and democracy and the things we believe in to be on our side. That includes the Saudis. They are going to have to take a hard line.

MEDICARE PREMIUM INCREASE SQUEEZES SENIORS' BUDGETS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday President Bush got up on his \$2.5 million podium and crowed about how his Medicare reform bill was making health care more affordable for seniors. But less than 24 hours later, this administration announced the largest increase in Medicare premiums in history.

Beginning in January, retirees and the disabled will see their Medicare premiums rise by \$11.60 per month, to \$78.20. That is an increase of 17 percent. It comes on the heels of last year's whopping 14 percent increase. The Bush administration deliberately tried to bury this bad news, releasing the information late on Friday in the midst of a hurricane and leading up to a long holiday weekend. They did that in the hopes that seniors would not notice.

The Social Security COLA will not be generous either. That is why the Bush administration needed to stifle news coverage about the Medicare premium increase. The Social Security trustees have predicted a 1.3 percent COLA for 2005. For a retiree receiving the average benefit of \$895, that amounts to a monthly increase of \$11.64.

After Medicare's premiums go up, seniors will be left with an additional 4

cents per month to handle rising expenses. Seniors have increasing housing costs, high gas prices, rising grocery bills and the prospects of record heating bills this winter, just like everyone else. Does 4 cents a month sound like enough of a cost-of-living increase to cover inflation and expenses?

The retirees I know pay very close attention to information about their health insurance costs because they need to watch every dime. But the same cannot be said of President Bush and the Republican Congress. The so-called Medicare reform bill that they are so quick to praise is largely to blame for the premium increases and Medicare's ongoing financial difficulties.

The Medicare reform bill, with a price tag of \$549 billion, spends more money to pad the pockets of corporate executives than it does to pay for prescription drugs or for more comprehensive medical coverage for seniors. More than 60 percent of the bill's cost is attributable to \$139 billion in overpayments to pharmaceutical companies, \$70 billion in subsidies to corporations and \$130 billion in overpayments to Medicare HMOs. These expenses do nothing to improve the quality of health care that seniors receive, but they certainly have a negative impact on the affordability of that care.

Today's retirees will not be the only ones to pay the price for the short-sighted, irresponsible agenda of President Bush and the Republican Congress. We all will, in today's budget deficits and tomorrow's skyrocketing Medicare costs.

None of the Medicare bill's \$549 billion price tag was paid for, which means it only adds to the Federal budget deficit. The growing budget deficit in turn means that we will not be able to put any money aside to shore up Medicare's finances for the impending retirement of the baby boom generation. Under this leadership, today's seniors and tomorrow's retirees can expect many years of outrageously high increases.

This is just another example of the Bush administration and the Republican Congress saying one thing and doing another. It sounds nice to say that you have added a comprehensive, guaranteed prescription drug benefit; but you did not. It sounds nice to say that you have made seniors' health care better and more affordable, but you have not done that either. President Bush and the Republican leadership have done just the opposite.

When seniors get their Social Security checks in January and those checks are only 4 cents more than what they got last January, they will know the difference between your words and your deeds.

HONORING THE FIRST RESPONDERS OF THE ELEVENTH DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, in the short time that I have been a Member of this Congress, of this body, the House of Representatives, I have come to expect a good measure of partisanship and partisan rhetoric that occurs on the floor of the House, especially during this, a Presidential election year. I have come to expect that, but not to enjoy it.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues, that the past hour I have sat here in this Chamber and seen a great measure of bipartisanship as our chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), came together to bring us this emergency supplemental appropriation to help the people in Florida who have been devastated by Hurricanes Charlie and Frances with this \$2 billion stopgap measure to get money to FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, to help the people of Florida in a bipartisan way, and to have us have this discussion led by the delegation from Florida, both Republicans and Democrats.

This is the kind of bipartisanship that the people of this country and the great State of Florida deserve to see more of. In fact, it reminded me that we are coming up pretty soon, this Saturday, in fact, on the third anniversary of a tragic event in this country. Of course, I am speaking of 9/11, when this body again was at its finest moment when they came together and there was not that level of partisanship, and we pulled together for the benefit of all Americans.

So, Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to rise and pay tribute to the first responders whose selfless service and hard work keep the citizens of the Nation, but particularly Georgia and my eleventh district, safe and secure each and every day.

Just as the moniker suggests, our Nation's first responders are the first to arrive at the scene and usually the last to leave. They are the brave souls risking their lives to prevent catastrophe and healing the wounded and broken when disaster strikes, just as they are doing in Florida today. They are always vigilant and ever ready, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

Since the tragic events of September 11, we have all learned that terrorists are not just looking at New York City and Washington, D.C. Rather, they have undertaken a vast effort to survey potential targets across this country. Should Metro Atlanta, the capital of the South, suffer an attack, you and I know that the brave first responders from West Georgia's Eleventh Congressional District will be among the many who will answer the call to duty.